



April 9, 2013

Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Room TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

**RE: In the Matter of: Nomination for the Universal Service Administrative Company
Board of Directors, CC Docket Nos. 97-21 and 96-45**

The Health Information Exchange of Montana (HIEM) wishes to support the National Rural Health Resource Center and National Rural Health Association nomination of Kipman Smith to serve on the board of directors of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). Mr. Smith is being nominated to represent rural health care providers and has over 25 years of experience working in the health care industry in Montana, including most recently the successful deployment of a broadband network funded by federal universal service funds in a remote, rural Montana region.

Mr. Smith has worked extensively with rural Critical Access Hospitals, certified rural health clinics and federally funded Community Health Centers during his career. Most recently, through his leadership with the HIEM, where he has served as our Executive Director since 2008, he has focused on adoption of electronic health records, health information exchange and shared telehealth/ telemedicine services.

Mr. Smith has been a long term champion for collaboration and coordination of resources to meet service demands in the rural communities of Montana. Through his efforts, several health care facilities, The University of Montana, and several local telecom companies have come together in an unprecedented manner to collaborate on the delivery of broadband services throughout northwest Montana. His knowledge and abilities would serve the board of USAC very well.

The HIEM believes it is important for the perspective of the relatively small, rural and frontier health providers, such as those we serve, to be represented on the USAC Board of Directors. The HIEM believes Mr. Smith is uniquely qualified and capable to fulfill this role. If you have any questions, or need any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me at 406-676-4441.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Steve Todd
Board Chairman